

The Lemon Grove REVIEW



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Wade Vickery leaving coaching after 19 successful years

by Marv Rosen

Any high school coach, in any sport, who managed to have a team in the top 10 in the county for 10 straight years, along with four San Diego CIF championships, has to be considered a success.

Wade Vickery, whose Santana High School basketball squad has done that very thing, has decided that after 19 years of coaching the Sultans, it is time to devote more time to his family. He said that he hasn't had a Christmas vacation in more than 30 years. He will continue to teach algebra at the school.

His success has been centered around a love of teaching and the enjoyment of being around the players and his fellow coaches.

While not copying any other coaches style, he did admit that the former UCLA coach John Wooden was his idol. Although he was not able to be as successful a player as Wooden, he has, in his own way, become as successful.

He feels that coaching has

kept him young and competitive. However, he felt that it has become more difficult to teach a team concept to this generation of players and that it was time to stop.

Vickery teaches a pressure

game, both on defense and offense. "The kids love this kind of game," he said. "They know that it also gives them more exposure," he added (thereby increasing their college scholarship possibilities).

Vickery said that while this was not one of his best teams, it may be the best defensively he has had in the last few years. Whether it is good enough to keep its ranking and do well in the CIF playoffs is unknown, but considering the past years, it should be. His last team not ranked was in 1986 when it had a 15-9 record.

He admitted that you have to have good players to win, but he considers himself a good teacher of the game with the ability to sell the players on the roles they need to play on a

team in order to win. If not a good shooter, a player still can be valuable on defense.

When looking at a player, he first notes their athleticism - ability to run and jump, then their willingness to learn, work hard and be aggressive. Leadership from within the team is also an important ingredient.

All of his players live within the school's district, although a few have moved there to be on his teams, including Sophia Sledge, the all-county player who is now a freshman starter for San Diego State.

All of the players on his team had participated in his youth basketball camps, which gives them a chance to work with his style of coaching.

Vickery said that there are very few surprises on players who make the varsity, since he has a chance to see them play as freshmen and on the junior varsity.

During any game, the Santana team always seems to hustle, no matter what the score. They press all over the floor, collapsing in the middle on defense and always seem aware of open players under their basket.

Their transition game, from defense to offense, is excellent, with break-away baskets coming quite frequently.

In a game on Friday at West



Santana player (dark jersey) gets the ball under the basket on a quick pass for what should be an easy bucket against West Hills on Friday.

Photo by Marv Rosen

Hills, the aggressive style of play showed most eloquently in the closing moments of the first half. The Wolf Pack had closed to within two points with 33 seconds to play. Instead of sitting on the ball for one last shot, Santana came down and scored, then stole the ball for another basket, thereby upping the lead to six points.

Santana eventually pulled away for a 60-31 victory, keeping their Grossmont North

Division record unblemished at 2-0 and at least a share of the league lead.

Vickery played basketball at Grossmont College, but not at San Diego State where he graduated in 1976 with a degree in accounting.

"I didn't have the ability to play at that level," he stated, but it obviously didn't turn him away from the game.

East County High Schools Sports Schedules

Tuesday, Jan. 28 - Tuesday, Feb. 4
(check with schools for times)

Tuesday - Varsity Basketball: Boys (girls at opposing sites); JVs play preliminaries). Granite Hills at Valhalla, Monte Vista at Helix, West Hills at Mount Miguel, El Cajon Valley at El Capitan, Santana at Grossmont. Varsity Soccer: Girls (boys at opposing sites). Mount Miguel at Valhalla, Monte Vista at Helix, West Hills at Grossmont, Santana at El Cajon Valley.

Thursday - Wrestling: Helix at Monte Vista, Mount Miguel at Valhalla, Granite Hills at El Cajon Valley, Santana at El Capitan, West Hills at Grossmont. Varsity Soccer (added date): Girls (boys reverse locations). Helix at Valhalla, Granite Hills at Mount Miguel, West Hills at El Capitan, Grossmont at Santana.

Friday - Varsity Basketball: Boys (girls play preliminary at same sites, JVs at opposing sites). West Hills at El Cajon Valley, Santana at El Capitan, Grossmont at Valhalla, Mount Miguel at Monte Vista, Granite Hills at Helix.

Tuesday (2/4) - Varsity Basketball: Boys (girls at opposing sites); JVs play preliminaries). Granite Hills at Helix, Mount Miguel at Monte Vista, West Hills at El Cajon Valley, Santana at El Capitan, Grossmont at Valhalla. Varsity Soccer: Girls (boys at opposing sites). Helix at Granite Hills, Valhalla at Monte Vista, El Capitan at Santana, El Cajon Valley at Grossmont.

Santee resident 'King for a day' at Chargers finale

by Greg Eichelberger

On Sunday, Dec. 22, Pat Strafford, of Santee, didn't let the constant drizzle and cold wind keep him from his day in the sun as he became the last honorary Charger captain under the five-year rule of Bobby Ross.

Although, at the time, no one could have foreseen what would happen with the team, the long-time fan and owner of Strafford Roofing, was ecstatic to be able to participate in the on-field ceremony, and have his photo taken with two of the Charger girls, among other things.

"The rain and the Charger's record didn't disappoint me a bit," he said. "Nothing would have stopped me from enjoying one of the greatest thrills in my life."

As a die-hard fan and season ticket holder for the past seven years, he's known many a thrill, and quite a few heartaches along the way.

He did attend the 1995 Super Bowl game in Miami (when the Chargers were

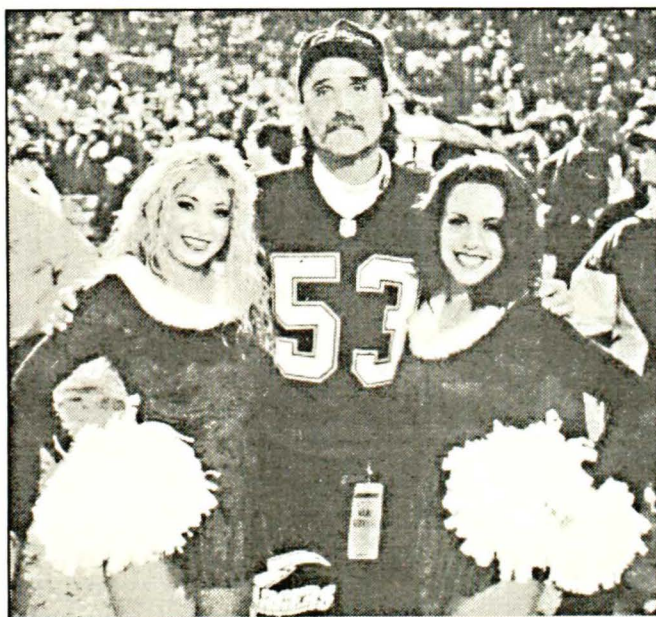
scalped by San Francisco, 49-26), but this is one of the best moments in his relationship with the squad.

His tale began several months ago when he signed up for the honor at the J.C. Penney's in Parkway Plaza. The store called a few weeks later to let him know that he had been chosen.

He was awarded two free tickets (which he gave to some friends), was taken onto the field, participated in the coin toss, was given the NFL commemorative coin and a chance to chat with General Manager Bobby Beathard, as well as some of the other coaches, who have now departed with the recent change of regimes.

While his wife, Marjorie and son, James, looked on, he was even allowed to stay on the damp field long enough to see the opening kickoff, and the first of QB Stan Humphrey's three interceptions, before being ushered off along with the other pre-game entertainment.

Despite the dismal beginning, however, the team rallied to defeat the Denver Broncos,



Pat Strafford of Santee discovers the benefits of royalty with two of the Chargers cheerleaders prior to the Chargers' final game after being picked as the honorary team captain for the game.

Photo by Greg Eichelberger

16-10, to close out an 8-8 campaign on a winning note.

"It was a frustrating season," he said. "But I still stand behind the team 100 percent,

and I look forward to more thrills in coming seasons."

And if they are half as memorable as this, he relishes the future.

Lemon Grove Fire Log

7100 blk. Rosemary Ln. Chest pains.
7400 blk. Broadway. Fall.
8300 blk. Broadway. Vehicle accident.
7400 blk. Madison Ave. Residential structure fire.
7400 blk. Broadway. Assist motorist.
7900 blk. Palm St. Bomb threat.
6900 blk. Central Ave. Fall.
7700 blk. Palm St. Broken water main.
6900 blk. Central Ave. Unknown medical.
3500 blk. Grove St. Asthma.
2800 blk. Skyline Dr. Overdose.
7100 blk. West View Pl. Unconscious.
3200 blk. Lemon Grove Ave. Bicycle accident.
7500 blk. Canton Dr. Single-engine response.

In the Service

Kahler is the daughter of Myrna and Charles Kahler of Lemon Grove.

PUBLIC NOTICES

0101

East County AYSO area champions advance to regionals

by Michael Krawczak

Last August, across the nine East County regions that comprise Area V, several hundred American Youth Soccer Organization teams formed up for a fall season of games.

By early December, all but a few dozen first-place teams were planning their end-of-season parties.

In mid-January, over the course of two weekends, the division champions from each region were back on the field, going head-to-head in pool play, further winnowing the number of active teams to 12 — the elite of Area V.

In Division 3 Boys action at Prospect School in Santee, the La Mesa Hurricanes edged Mountain Empire 2-1 on a Nick Munoz goal in overtime.

Outscoring their opponents 71-16 during the regular season,

the Hurricanes continued its domination into the tournament, shutting out Alpine and Lakeside on their first weekend of play, then slipping past excellent Santee and El Cajon teams.

Jared Braden, who scored 23 regular season goals, had an outstanding tournament. Michael Aife had a great series in goal for the Hurricanes. Team captain Brad Boland anchored the defense.

Hurricanes coach Paulo DaSilva attributed his team's success to discipline and excellent ball handling. Occasionally trailing at halftime, they always came back with strong second halves.

In the Division 3 Girls final at Montgomery Field in El Cajon, the Jamul Smurfs and the Mountain Empire Kmakrazies completed regulation play deadlocked, 3-3.

Two scoreless, nine-minute

overtime periods ensued, setting up a shootout. The first four shooters for each team were successful.

When Mountain Empire missed on the fifth attempt, the Smurfs' Kim Bret brought the game to an end with a winning score. Alana Hamer totaled three goals in the winning effort for the Smurfs. Jamul coach Mike Hamer also praised his goalkeeper, Maggie Bruce.

Following an undefeated regular season, the Smurfs battled back from an early tournament loss to take the division crown.

In Alpine, the Santee Black Panthers shut out the La Mesa Sharpshooters 3-0, taking the Division 4 Boys title. Kevin LaRochelle, Josh Galati and Jack Westphal accounted for the scoring, while Santee goalkeeper Cory Ryan Smith kept La Mesa out of the net.

Black Panthers coach Dennis Dunne noted the contributions of center defenders Westphal and Nick Harvey.

"The kids stepped up and played some great soccer," said Dunne. "It was a real team effort."

In earlier tournament action, Brendan Dunne scored all of Santee's goals in a 5-3 win over La Mesa, and his brother Brian did the same in the Black Panthers' 2-1 victory over Lakeside.

At Jamul, the El Cajon Tidal Wave defeated the Santee Rip Tides 3-0, in the Division 4 Girls final. The Rip Tides advanced to the final as the wild card team, suffering their only prior tournament loss at the hands of the Tidal Wave, 6-0.

Santee goalkeeper Megan Acerra stopped numerous El Cajon shots. Debbie Klein and Bethany Ebbert also had solid games for the Rip Tides.



The Santee Cyclones (stripped shirts) and Jamul Strikers (white shorts) chase the ball all over the Grossmont High School field on the first day of AYSO all-star competition. Photo by Michael Krawczak

Sports Beat

with Greg Eichelberger



As the bizarre Jack Murphy Stadium deal twists and turns like the plot of an O. Henry story, let me guide you through the maze of sports and recreation as best I can. Take my hand and follow me.

First of all, I must say that although my heart was with New England, the NFC did it again with Green Bay over the Patriots 35-21.

Congratulations to Grossmont Community College basketball forward Danny English, chosen as the Pacific Coast Conference Player of the Week (Jan. 19 - 25). English, a 6-foot-6-inch freshman from Illinois, totaled 58 points two weeks ago in wins over San Diego City and Mira Costa.

Winter sports are in full swing, and Forum Publications is going all out to try to cover them for you. Despite, not being a big fan of wrestling or volleyball, or even girls basketball (30 points a game is nothing to get excited about), we will put aside our prejudices and do our best.

Just wrapped up another East County baseball camp run by local legends Steve Vickery (El Capitan High School) and Brian Graham (Cleveland's AAA skipper). Once again, Tom Fordham (White Sox), Tony Clark (Tigers), Brian Giles and Charles Nagy (Indians) were all there to help local kids learn the ABCs.

And speaking of which, get a load of this joker from Japan, Hideki Irabu, who now says he wants no part in negotiating a contract with the Padres, opting instead to play for the New York Yankees. This clown hasn't thrown one pitch in the Majors, and already he's copping a big time attitude. Plus, it doesn't surprise this scribbler that the fat, pudgy, pasty face of George Steinbrenner is behind this episode, either. I say, let New York handle the massive flow of Japanese media who flock to cover players only of their nationality, and leave me to snap photos of my Padres in peace. Thank you. The Nipponese Nolan Ryan, indeed.

Last week Curt Flood, the great centerfielder for some great St. Louis Cardinal teams (1964, '67 and '68), passed away, a victim of throat cancer. For those uninformed, high-paid athletes, who don't recognize the name, in 1969, he was dealt from the Redbirds to the lowly Philadelphia Phillies (just like Steve Carlton would be several years later — stupid August Busch). But Flood, having played for St. Louis for 12 seasons, didn't want to leave, and felt that in America, a person should be able to work where he pleased, as long as he had put in sufficient time at that organization. However, baseball owners were running things like it was Germany, 1938, so they opposed this attitude. Challenging the reserve clause, he took his battle to the judiciary, where it was finally settled by the Supreme Court, against him. Later, Andy Messersmith and Jim "Catfish" Hunter successfully fought the clause and free agency was born.

Players today, whose salaries could pay off the national debts of most third world countries, should observe a moment of silence for Flood, a great player on the field, and a great man off of it.

The sports movie minute review this week is for the film, "Prefontaine," the biopic of the late University of Oregon track star, Steve Prefontaine. Like an American version of "Chariots of Fire," this is full of grit, pathos and realism, plus it was made by the same people who brought you "Hoop Dreams," another great sports movie.

In closing, kudos to Michelle Sims, a 16-year-old junior at Grossmont High, who won the 17-and-under Black Belt Weapons and Traditional Katas, as well as the overall Black Belt Grand Championship at a tournament in Las Vegas, and to the Santee Black Panthers, who claimed the Boys' Area V title, for 12 and 13-year-olds, in competition held in Alpine last week. These kids will next play in an invitational on Feb. 14 in Chula Vista, and then travel to Irvine in March to participate in the Southern California sectional tourney. Good luck, guys.

Had enough sports news for one week? Want to contribute something? Just call me at 390-7103 and we'll put something together for you. In the meantime, though, have a great sports week.

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news and
photos*
today!**

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